Bamboo and Cane Industry

888. SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Will the Minister of MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that bamboo and cane products of North-Eastern Region are in great demands in international market;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action plan of the Centre to help small sector of North-Eastern Region to provide modern training to the artisans, living in abject poverty with a view to improve their economy along with the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SHRI MAHAVIR PRASAD): (a) and (b) Bamboo and cane products of the North-Eastern Region are being exported to different countries like Australia, Belgium, Canada, USA, Germany, Denmark, France, UK, etc., by several exporters from India. The main products exported are: Bamboo Bags, Bamboo flowers, Bamboo furniture, Mats, Musical Instruments, Bamboo frames, Sport Items, Cane sticks and other Handicarft items. The Quantum of exports of Bamboo and cane products from India in the last four years are:

Year 2003-04	Rs. 12.39 crore
Year 2004-05	Rs. 14.18 crore
Year 2005-06	Rs. 17.28 crore
Year 2006-07	Rs. 24.85 crore

(c) Different agencies of the Government of India provide training to the artisans involved in the manufacture of bamboo and cane products in the North-East. These include:

(i) The Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), under the Ministry of Textile, is the leading organisation working for the development of Handicraft Sector including Bamboo and Cane Handicraft Products in the country from NER. They have taken up interventions in more than 10 Bamboo and Cane clusters in NER. Human Resource Development Scheme has been formulated to provide qualified and trained work force to establish strong production centres coupled with improved quality by using appropriate technologies processes and innovative designs to meet the present day international market requirement.

(ii) Cane and Bamboo Technology Centre (CBTC), Guwahati, also imparts training to the artisans for NER, CBTC in association with Ministry of Labour, Government of India, has developed a Month long course curriculum on Bamboo technology, which is recognised by Directorate General of Employment and Training Government of India. CBTC in association with the Directorate of Employment and Craftsman Training, Government of Assam, has introduced Bamboo Technology Course at Kokrajhar with World Bank assistance.

(iii) The Bamboo and Cane Institute at Agartala (Tripura) under the Ministry of Textile, Government of India, imparts training to the artisans for a period of six months with a stipend of Rs. 350/- per trainee per month with free hostel facilities.

(iv) Under the Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI) of Ministry of MSME, four Bambooo and Cane clusters have been identified in NER (two in Assam, one each in Mizoram and Meghalaya) for skill building/capacity development of grassroots artisans and technology upgradation. Around 3000 artisans have been covered under the schemes.

Electrification of railway tracks

889. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the policy of his Ministry regarding electrification of railway tracks;

(b) whether it is not proper to have railway tracks electrified to be optimum; and

(c) how many proposals for electrification of railway tracks have been recommended from the State of Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh and what is the present status of these proposals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Electrification projects are considered primarily on traffic volumes, economic viability and operational necessity.

(c) No proposal has been recommended by the State Government of Andhra Pradesh in recent past. The State Government of Rajasthan had recommended electrification of Bina-Kota, Jaipur-Sawai Madhopur and Ratlam-Neemuch-Chittorgarh sections, amongst which, work is in progress on Bina-Kota section. Electrification of the other two routes has not been found viable on present volumes of traffic.

Loco reparing factory at Anugul

†890. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of employees working at present in the loco repairing factory situated at Anugul in Orissa;

(b) the work being actually carried out in that factory at present;

(c) whether Government accepts that the pace of work of the factory is slow; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor alongwith the measures to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Approximately 176 employees are working at present in the electric loco shed at Anugal in Orissa.

(b) At present 44 electric locomotives are allotted for their maintenance at the electric loco shed at Anugul. The prescribed inspection and maintenance schedules and unscheduled repairs of electric locos are carried out.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.